

# HOUSTON SKY



A Bimonthly Newsletter for Houston-Area MUFON Members and Others

No. 3, Feb./Mar 1995

## UFOs & the New World Order: *Inescapable Ambiguities—Part 2 (Conclusion)*

by Michael Lindemann

In Part One of this article /Houston Sky, Dec. '94/Jan. '95/, I briefly outlined the following points: By general agreement, the New World Order, though hard to define, already does exist and will keep evolving and solidifying for at least the next several decades. In contrast, the very existence of UFOs and alleged "alien" intelligence on earth remains highly controversial and largely unacknowledged. This is partly due to the elusive character of the phenomena themselves. But it has more to do with long-running official ("government") policies of denial and deception, apparently with the compliance of mainstream science and media.

Official denial of UFOs provides cover not only for the inconvenient fact of genuine anomalous phenomena, but also for super-secret programs and technologies of human making, such as the "non-existent" Aurora aircraft.

Some researchers believe that all "UFO" and "alien" phenomena are products of terrestrial technologies such as advanced aircraft, super-advanced holography, mind-control, even genetic engineering. In this author's opinion, some UFO-type incidents may have such explanations, but many do not. Moreover, claims of such super-advanced human technology, while theoretically possible, are not supported by good evidence. It is far more likely that real aliens are present on earth than that human mind-control, holography, or genetic engineering can now produce thousands of false incidents of "alien encounter" among the general public.

Let me clearly state my position on "the alien presence." Six years of nearly full-time research leaves me convinced that advanced non-human intelligent beings of at least several

distinct types are active on our planet today. From the standpoint of grass-roots UFO research, this point remains unproven; nonetheless, I consider it axiomatic. Furthermore, no matter what technological advances may have been secretly achieved by human science, and no matter what distortions of political will may inform the emerging New World Order, I regard the genuine alien presence as a looming, inescapable political inconvenience in the minds of those who truly know.

It is not obvious, nor even likely in my view, that the architects of the New World Order are motivated by the kind of malevolent intent often ascribed to them by conspiracy theorists. Many overt signs of social and economic progress around the globe today argue instead for a strong tide of benign and peaceful intentions among the majority of

world leaders.

Still, it seems to me virtually certain that behind the scenes, preparations are under way for an inevitable time—perhaps very soon—when the world will have to adjust to the potentially jarring reality of "aliens among us." Even among leaders of good will, the spectre of alien-inspired public tumult must have a distorting effect upon policy.

Clear patterns of official denial, deception, and aggressive suppression of UFO-related information that began before or during World War II strongly suggest an official expectation that revelations of an alien presence posed huge social and political risks. Arguably, those risks have been reduced since the days of Roswell, partly by intentional "desensitizing" efforts by human (loosely "governmental") agencies, which began in earnest, I believe,

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*"Rockefeller is also said to be pursuing 'back-channel' influence on President Clinton's inner circle of advisors, with the apparent hope of prompting official revelations before 1996."*

## Worth Repeating

*A Digest of Ideas from Researchers, Enthusiasts, Buffs, Kooks, Skeptics, Debunkers, and Others*

### Intellectual Avalanche

"When a serious person decides foolishly to throw all of his or her extra time into finding out about UFOs, there begins an intellectual avalanche of connections and demands which is, essentially, endless. This field is forever rich, but that richness betrays a multidisciplinary which defies any amount of training. This subject is, in fact, the most multidisciplinary one that this author has ever experienced."

—Michael D. Swords, PhD, "A Guide to UFO Research," *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1993, pp. 65-87

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## Worth Repeating

### Turn-of-the-Century Visionaries

"As lightly as we may treat the airship problem, there are thousands of wise people who think that the next century will be the age of utilization of the atmosphere for transportation purposes as the present century has been the age of steam and the beginning of electric inventions and discoveries."

—Houston Post, May 14, 1897 (from *The Great Texas Airship Mystery*, by Wallace O. Chariton, Wordware Publishing, 1991)

### 1897 Airship Mystery

"In 1897 there was no such thing as a flying object so anything seen patrolling the heavens was technically unidentified—a UFO. Eventually, when all other explanations seem to have been eliminated or discounted, the possibility that the mystery airship was of an extraterrestrial origin has to be explored."

—Wallace O. Chariton, *The Great Texas Airship Mystery*, Wordware Publishing, 1991)  
[Editor's note: Aspects of the 1897 airship mystery will be discussed by John Schuessler at the Feb. 13 VISIT meeting (see "Of Interest," back page).

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MUFON's long-awaited *Investigator's Field Manual* will be available from MUFON (103 Oldtowne Rd., Seguin, TX 78155), beginning March 1, for \$25 plus \$3.50 S/H.

## ★ Flash Way Back

### The Great Texas Airship Mystery—1897

From November 1896 to May 1897, a mysterious flying object—a large cigar-shaped craft—was seen up and down the West Coast of the United States and in the Midwest from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, including Texas. (In August 1883, over Zacatecas, Mexico, more than 400 cigar-shaped and disc-shaped objects had been seen moving across the sun.) What made the object so mysterious was that it was sighted by many people and over many states just *before* Gold Rush fever-inspired motorized dirigibles were being lofted in California by inventors like August Greth and Rufus Porter. The American craft disappeared as quickly as it had arrived, leaving behind a mystery that has never been resolved.

Wallace O. Chariton, a fifth-generation Texan, Plano resident, and life-long collector of Texana, has written numerous books on various Texas-related subjects. In 1991, he published *The Great Texas Airship Mystery* (Plano, Texas: Wordware Publishing, Inc.), in which he reconstructed this baffling story from more than 100 newspaper accounts. In the book's acknowledgments, Mr. Chariton credits Walt Andrus, Jerome Clark, and Thomas E. Bullard among those who were instrumental in his research.

*In a recent phone conversation, Mr. Chariton graciously granted Houston Sky permission to excerpt a portion of the book, pages 83-84. The Great Texas Airship Mystery is available in most Houston-area bookstores. John Schuessler will be speaking at his February 13 VISIT meeting on sightings of the airship reported in Missouri newspapers (see "Of Interest," back page).*

Saturday, April 17, 1897, was the second most active day for the airship, which by then had certainly become the talk of Texas. It was the day when the mysterious flying marvel got the most newspaper coverage, and a number of the stories were very strange. One of the most provocative dispatches that day came from Aurora, a small farming community in Wise County.

"The Aurora report was the work of S. E. Haydon, a cotton buyer and part-time newspaper stringer. According to the story Haydon sent to the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Fort Worth Register*, the mysterious aerial traveler was seen over Aurora early Saturday morning. Regrettably, the ship was seen crashing into Judge Proctor's windmill on the top of a small hill. The explosion which resulted from the accident aroused most of the town, killed the one passenger on board the ship, and destroyed the judge's windmill, water tank, and flower garden.

"Although badly disfigured by the fire, the pilot was identified by Mr. T. J. Weems, said to be an authority on astronomy, as a native of the planet Mars.

"Papers found on the body, apparently fireproof, were written in some unknown hieroglyphics that could not be deciphered, but Haydon supposed they were some sort of record of the pilot's travels. The story concluded with the announcement that the pilot's funeral would take place at noon Easter Sunday, which was of little consequence since the story was not printed until Monday.

"Even though the tale of the Aurora space-man was mostly ignored at the time, it was destined to be the most famous story of the entire 1897 airship period, and more than sixty years after the fact, the legend of the man from Mars would be largely responsible for the entire airship mystery not slipping off into the pages of forgotten history. But in 1897, the crash into the Wise County windmill was a complication.

"If, as most people supposed, there was only one frisky flyer soaring above Texas, and if Haydon was not lying, then the airship mystery would have been at an end. It didn't happen that way. The reported sightings continued, meaning either Haydon was a hoaxer or there was more than one airship aloft." ♦

**(800) UFO-2166**  
**(800) 836-2166**



A new national UFO hotline, co-sponsored by the Mutual UFO Network, Center for UFO Studies, and Fund for UFO Research, is supported in part by the Bigelow Foundation. MUFON is managing the electronic mailbox and is making plans for informing sheriff departments and police stations about the 800 service. This number is being promoted and used first in Texas.

during the Nixon administration, but perhaps more so by a carefully modulated series of revelations by the aliens themselves.

The "age of saucer sightings," though not over, probably peaked during the 1950s and 1960s. Later, sightings of craft were supplemented and gradually overshadowed by reports of direct encounters with beings, resulting in a wave of "classic" abduction cases during the mid-1970s, and turning to a flood of encounter reports, with ever-increasing confluence of detail, from the early 1980s to the present moment. Most recently, the nature of reported encounters is showing at least two new trends: 1) more and more experiencers characterize their encounters as neutral to positive, compared with a predominance of negative reports only a few years ago; and 2) more and more encounters seem to have "teaching" or messages about the future" as the most impressive feature, compared with the previously predominant sexual component (sex and procreative activity remain strong, but not always dominant).

I now suspect that the "alien secret" could never have been kept if it had not been in the interests of the aliens as well as the government. This is not meant to imply any direct agreement or complicity—only a possible coincidence of perceived advantage. Similarly, if the aliens are now pushing toward more overt revelations in the near future (as most abductees seem to believe), there is nothing earthly governments can do but try to soften the blow with pre-emptive, perhaps subliminal, quasi-revelations and explanations. I do not believe any government has ever held any bargaining leverage whatsoever with respect to alien activity on this planet.

Much of the foregoing is speculative. The following are several data points I have considered in drawing my conclusions. Admittedly, these items do not all point in the same direction. The "real story" of UFOs and the New World Order remains ambiguous.

In several private conversations, I've been told that some present and former military and intelligence personnel are convinced that at least one alien faction is actively malevolent. There are veiled references to "Earth's secret war" and comparisons with the apocalyptic predictions of the "Book of Revelations."

It is not clear that the U.S. military has ever believed it could fight and win an "alien war." But major new weapons programs appear to anticipate exceedingly capable enemies, leaving one to ask who those enemies might be. As previously noted, the U.S. has certainly devel-

oped a number of new, super-fast, super-secret military aircraft. The U.S. government also maintains and continues to build a vast network of sophisticated underground facilities, many capable of surviving direct nuclear attack.

The U.S. Department of Defense is also moving to revive the "Star Wars" program with emphasis on ground-based defenses. Weapons systems now under development include a new generation of missile-killing airborne chemical lasers and a new generation of anti-missile missiles called THAAD, or Theater High-Altitude Area Defense system, which would be guided from space-based satellites.

Project HAARP (High-Frequency Active Auroral Research Program) is a joint Air Force and Navy project under contract with the Air Force's Phillips Laboratory, with main test facilities in Alaska. HAARP directs electromagnetic beams at the ionosphere for purposes said to include communication with submarines and ballistic missile detection. But perhaps HAARP's primary objective was revealed in a Senate report prepared for the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 1995, which said: "This transmitter in Alaska... could allow earth-penetrating tomography over most of the northern hemisphere. Such a capability would permit the detection and precise location of tunnels, shelters, and other underground shelters. The absence of such a capability has been noted as a serious weakness in the Department of Defense plans for precision attacks on hardened targets and for counter-proliferation."

Are such huge undertakings warranted if our worst enemy is no more formidable than Saddam Hussein? Or have we entered a new "Cold War," in which our weapons are again meant mainly to deter rather than to undertake hostilities? If so, who are we really trying to impress?

Meanwhile, unprecedented sums of private money are flowing into UFO-related research. There is no sign of consensus on the perceived "nature of the aliens" among the several best-known donors.

Robert Bigelow, who recently pledged one million dollars to a research fund jointly administered by MUFON, CUFOS, and the Fund for UFO Research (FUFOR), and whose previous largesse bankrolled the now-famous Roper Poll on "unusual personal experiences," plainly believes that well-funded research might produce much-needed breakthroughs in our understanding of alien phenomena, but otherwise keeps his views to himself.

Laurence Rockefeller has told several well-known researchers that human-alien encounter on earth is the most pressing issue of our time

## Worth Repeating

### Blame It on Aliens!

"...The question nobody seems to be asking in this Intel fiasco is where the bug came from originally. Fortunately, I have the answer, courtesy of Intel's own IMAX film, 'The Journey Inside,' which is playing on really big screens, generally in museums. In the film, extraterrestrials decide Earth is advancing too quickly in technology, so they try to slow things up by pumping an error into the M3 layer of the floating-point section of a new microprocessor. I am not making this up.

"The IMAX film began showing in the spring of 1994, months before the Pentium flaw was first announced. In the super-arcanic world of super-chips, with Intel locked in mortal combat with the IBM-Motorola-Apple chip consortium, this is one of the weirdest wrinkles ever." —ISCNI's "CNI News," by way of Inforworld's "Notes from the Field," Robert X. Cringely, Dec. 19, 1994

### Courage & Conviction

"It is the persistence of the UFO reports, and the contents of those reports, that constitute the UFO phenomenon; it is this phenomenon that must be studied and its validity judged independently of any hypothesis of its origin. To do otherwise is simply not honest science." —J. Allen Hynek, 1910-1986

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## Worth Repeating

### NSS Goes Out on a Limb

"...But as a contingency exercise, I'm wondering: what if we are not alone? What if they are here, and they have, or will soon, contact us? I think we must consider some of the consequences of such revelations, just in case. I'm going to take a big leap here—and presume that we are being observed and even contacted. I'm going to suggest that all this is going on with the knowledge of some individuals within our government. But I'm going to move beyond that and consider what happens when all this becomes known generally. After the admissions are made. When everyone looks up and knows that vehicles of other worldly manufacture are performing impossible maneuvers in our skies! What will this do to our space programs?

"First, while the government holds hearings, private and government money will be poured into research to duplicate their propulsion technology (field-distortion control? Warp-drive? Stable worm-holes?) Rocket science will take off, but only the far-out stuff.

"Then, with the yelled and whispered debates about humanity's place in the suddenly crowded universe (or universes!), we can expect a renewed interest in going out there ourselves to see, feel, and lay claim.

"But in the beginning, when driving, keep your eyes on the car ahead of you. They may be too busy watching the skies." —Charles Walker, president, National Space Society, *Journal of the National Space Society*, Nov./Dec. 1994

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## Jack Kasher and James Oberg: STS-48 Dialogue

*Disagreements, Disavowals, Groans—and Grace*

On September 15, 1991, *Space Shuttle Discovery* videotaped several glowing objects that floated into sight and angled sharply after a light flashed in the lower left of the picture. Seconds after, two streaks of light shot through the area the objects had vacated. One minute later, the *Shuttle's* camera ceased broadcasting.

Physics professor Jack Kasher, PhD [see sidebar, page 6], found these anomalous objects intriguing and rejected NASA's explanation that they were simply bits of ice thrust away by the *Shuttle's* attitude adjustor rockets. He felt that *had* the rockets caused the mysterious particles' change of direction, their directional paths would have traced back to one single source. Through his research, however, he found that the particles were propelled in *different* directions—thus from *different* sources—with one object remaining in place for almost half a second.

At the July 1994 MUFON UFO Conference in Austin, Dr. Kasher presented his research based on the videotape, including a frame-by-frame analysis of the video itself. He concluded that the particles may have been "some kind of spaceship at a considerable distance from the *Shuttle*," and that "though he could only speculate, the streaks of light look like missiles fired in their direction."

Dr. Kasher's research into *STS-48* was supported in part by the Fund for UFO Research. His full report is available from FUFOR, PO Box 277, Mt. Rainier, MD 20712. The report—minus appendices—is also found in the *MUFON 1994 International UFO Symposium Proceedings*, available from MUFON in Seguin, TX. A 95-minute video of the NASA footage, plus events from other missions, can be ordered for \$29.95 from AFS/Dialogue, PO Box 8391, Minneapolis, MN 55408.

*What follows is an exchange between Dr. Kasher and James Oberg [see sidebar on page 7], initiated by Mr. Oberg in December 1994 on the internet. Thanks to Houston Sky's Rebecca Schatte for spotting the message, and especially to Dr. Kasher for providing Houston Sky both his response to that message and an earlier, related exchange between the two researchers.*

### James Oberg's Internet Message to Jack Kasher, Dec. 1994

When I first drafted my assessment of the December 4, 1994, Fox-TV "Encounters" program segment on "Astronauts and UFOs," my text was full of angry words about "a new low in tabloid television sleaze," or a "travesty on investigative ethics," or "bald lies." Then I calmed down and decided to let facts rather than rhetoric make the damning indictment. Here's a partial listing of what I see are the factual atrocities and blunders committed by the program producers:

The program quotes extensively from Jack Kasher about *STS-48* dancing blips—alleging five proofs they can't be ice and therefore by elimination (groan!) must be alien spacecraft. But Kasher's illogic seeps through with his claim that since *STS-48*, all NASA space TV became screened (an incorrect claim, in any case) to "plug leaks" and hide UFOs. But then he proudly points to [the] *STS-61* (Hubble repair) flight video of other streaking dots as further proof of UFOs—even though he claimed NASA was screening all such video to prevent people from ever seeing such UFOs! You can't have it both ways—and remain rational.

Kasher made a claim that the object "stopped" for a full half-second during the

"flash" (the jet firing), which he said ice couldn't do. People watching the video never saw it "stop," but on Kasher's printed report (not shown on TV), there is a flat area in the graph of object motion [its position-time graph].

But Kasher doesn't seem to realize that since there is no standard frame of reference for motion in space, the "stopping" could have shown up on the TV screen as motion in *any* direction. It did not, and that's the overlooked clue—it stopped only in reference to the TV's field of view, which suggests the "stopping" was an artifact of the TV scan, not of the object's actual motion. This is borne out by Kasher's technical paper: since the TV image is digitized (i.e., in discrete pixels, not in analog continuous form), every position is "rounded off" to the nearest whole pixel. A proper chart should have included "error bars" which show the entire span of the view which is mapped into each specific digital position. When that (i.e., adding the error bars) is done, the curved change of course of the particle fits entirely and smoothly into the error-bar-covered region. There is *no* "stop"—it is an illusion of naive data processing by Kasher. *see STS-48, page 6*

and has pledged to use his few remaining years and a portion of his huge wealth to further not only UFO research but also official acknowledgement. Rockefeller money has supported the Human Potential Foundation of C. B. Scott Jones, which in turn has undertaken several public initiatives on human-alien encounter. Rockefeller gave a reported \$250,000 to Dr. John Mack's P.E.E.R organization. Rockefeller is also said to be pursuing "back-channel" influence on President Clinton's inner circle of advisors, with the apparent hope of prompting official revelations before 1996.

Prince Hans-Adam of Liechtenstein, said to be among the world's wealthiest men, may have been a silent partner in one or more of Robert Bigelow's UFO projects. He also seems to believe that human-alien contact is the top issue of our time, but views at least some of the aliens as dangerously negative. I have not been able to learn the extent of his giving, but it is potentially enormous.

Two extremely wealthy New York-based women, Sandra Houghton and Marie Galbraith, have formed the BSW Foundation for the avowed purpose of bringing the "best evidence" of UFOs and alien activity to the attention of world leaders. They are collaborating to some extent with Laurence Rockefeller and have placed emphasis on promoting United Nations action on the UFO question. They have a potential ally in Madame Boutros-Ghali, wife of the Secretary General, who has made it her personal business to instigate serious UFO investigation under U.N. auspices. Meanwhile, Sandra Houghton has met repeatedly with Dr. Steven Greer of CSETI, and traveled recently to Mexico with Greer to see the alleged Mexico City UFOs for herself. The BSW Foundation, like Greer, seems dedicated to the assumption that the aliens are undoubtedly benevolent and contact is sure to be good for humanity.

Overt signs of global economic and political reorganization suggest a prevailing

assumption among world leaders that the future will be continuous with the present; that is, there are no expected breaks or discontinuities such as might accompany a catastrophic war, natural cataclysm—or alien revelation. But this in no way argues against knowledge of, or planning for, such potential upheavals. Indeed, to do anything other than press forward with "business as usual" would be a sure sign of trouble, just the kind of sign no one wants to give.

On the other hand, I believe the top ranks of society (those I formerly termed "the Olympians") assume they can successfully ride out any anticipated global disturbance, including one of alien origin.

I also believe that any steps taken to "prepare" the unsuspecting public for coming alien revelations are meant above all to minimize damage to property and social systems. There is no hint of humanitarian impulse, only a determination to preserve order and the prevailing power structure. From the standpoint of top leadership, this represents the proper balance between benevolence and brute practicality. Disorder is a greater enemy than the aliens themselves. Will the goal of preserving order be met? For the most part, I think yes.

Nonetheless, in a fairly short time—no more than a few decades—the fact of direct and widespread human-alien encounter will probably transform human society beyond our wildest expectations. Like the corporation that plans only for the next quarterly bottom line, the architects of the New World Order may have no strategic vision beyond surviving the first wave of alien-inspired change. From there on, everyone on earth will be in uncharted territory.

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Please note ISCNI's toll-free phone number: (800) 414-7264 (incorrectly listed in the last issue—Sorry!) For frequent travelers on the information superhighway, ISCNI's e-mail address is [ISCNI@aol.com](mailto:ISCNI@aol.com). ♦

## Good Books for Cold Nights

Two new UFO-related St. Martin's Press novels just released are worth checking out. The first, *Millennium*, by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jack Anderson, involves an alien who comes to earth to destroy the human race. An intriguing author's note—in true Anderson fashion—states, "It is the nature of government officials to cover up what they cannot explain. Otherwise, they may be called upon to explain

mysteries that they cannot understand."

*Dreamland*, a thriller by Hillary Hemingway (the niece) and her husband, Jeffery Lindsay, covers the UFO conspiracy spectrum—abductions, the military, and captured aliens. According to mystery writer Edna Buchanan, "*Dreamland* will leave you sleepless and prickly the hair on the back of your neck. You will never look at the night sky in the same way again." ♦

## Worth Repeating

### SETI II—Still Waiting

"The scientists are convinced extraterrestrial intelligence, probably far more advanced than our own, is somewhere out there. And they promise they will announce any confirmed discovery quickly. Until then, they regard it as a matter of when, not if.

"We could have success at any step, but we are prepared for the long journey. It might take a decade. It might take a century. We can't just sit here and wait for them to arrive in their shiny spacecraft. That's not going to happen."

—Physicist John Dreher, speaking on behalf of the new SETI-like Project Phoenix, in which observatories around the world are focusing on 1,000 stars for the next decade, *Houston Post*, Jan. 28, 1995

### Water Down a Drain...

"The unresolved questions are: If there is a black hole at the center of a galaxy, does that mean that all matter in that galaxy will eventually be drawn down into the massive gravitational attraction like water swirling down into a drain? And where does all the matter end up when it goes into a black hole?

One possibility is an explosion of a 'white hole' that comes out in yet another universe next door to ours." —Linda Moulton Howe, in ISCNI's "CNI News," based on a Jan. 12, 1995, *Washington Post* story about a possible black hole recently discovered by a U.S.-Japanese team featured in *Nature*, Jan. 1995

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## Worth Repeating

### Controversy Heats Up

"The False Memory Syndrome Foundation has a plan to 'blitz' the legislators of several states [including Texas] soon after the first of the year with bills that will legalize and encourage third-party lawsuits against therapists... These bills are very cleverly worded such that, at least superficially, they

appear to be consumer protections.

However, close examination of some of these bills reveals that anyone mentioned by a patient or client during the course of therapy can sue the therapist, claiming

that he or she has been harmed." —*The Newsletter of The [Texas] Society for the Investigation, Treatment and Prevention of Ritual and Cult Abuse*, Winter 1994-95

### Earth to Carl!

"The Galileo spacecraft found clear signs of life during its recent flight past the earth—a reassurance that we really do know how to sniff out at least certain kinds of life. And rapidly accumulating evidence strongly suggests that the universe abounds with planetary systems something like our own." —Carl Sagan, "The Search for Extraterrestrial Life," *Scientific American*, October 1994

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### Jack Kasher's Response to James Oberg (Personal Letter), Dec. 15, 1994

**Jim:** One of my students was surfing on the internet this week, and came upon some remarks you made about my appearance on the "Encounters" show on Fox. Here are my responses to your claims.

First of all, why the groan about my statement that the objects were spacecraft? (I was careful to say spacecraft, not alien spacecraft, as you said in your comments.) If they were not ice particles or objects very close to the camera, then they were objects out in space away from

**Jack Kasher, PhD** Dr. Kasher is professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, where he has received numerous awards of excellence (Distinguished Professor, Excellence in Teaching, Faculty Achievement). From 1975 to 1992, Dr. Kasher was a consultant and a summer employee at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, where he specialized in electromagnetic theory and worked on the Star Wars defense system. During the summer of 1991, he worked at NASA's Marshall Spaceflight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, and has continued his NASA-related research since that time. Dr. Kasher has published more than 35 articles in scientific journals and has presented seven papers at professional physics conferences.

He is MUFON's Nebraska state director and central region director (for Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and 17 other states). He has spoken more than 100 times on UFOs and has appeared on numerous national television and radio programs.

the Shuttle. They were obviously not space junk, satellites, or meteorites, since these don't change direction. The objects did change direction; therefore, they accelerated. They were at times clearly above the Earth's atmosphere. What else could they be besides spacecraft? I'm open to suggestions.

Secondly, my claim that NASA screens Shuttle video is based on electronic mail sent by Ken Jenks [of the JSC Space Shuttle office]. I've enclosed a copy. Note the underlined text, especially "Video downlink on transponder 5 will be scrambled from now on, permanently and forever, Amen." If you have proof that NASA has changed its policy since this came out, I'm willing to back off from my statement. Also, I made no claims about NASA plugging leaks and hiding UFOs, as you inferred. I simply said that the video was no longer live, and let people draw their own conclusions.

Next, you claim that I "proudly point to [the] STS-61 (Hubble repair) flight video of other streaking dots as further proof of UFOs—even though (I) claimed NASA was screening all such video to prevent people from ever seeing

such UFOs! You can't have it both ways—and remain rational."

Which one of us is the irrational one here? First, as I just said, I never claimed that NASA was trying to hide UFOs. You are extrapolating beyond the facts once again. Second (and very logically and rationally), I *can* have it both ways. What if the person in charge of the screening simply goofed, and missed this one?

Third, I made no claim whatsoever about UFOs when I was discussing the STS-61 film. My exact words, after I went through the tape and described what was happening, were "It makes you scratch your head a little bit, and wonder what might have been going on. Again, that's not a proof of anything, but it's a curious thing." From that you inferred that I was claiming that we saw UFOs? And you call *me* illogical. I was even more careful during the filming with the [Fox] TV crew. I explicitly said that I didn't know what the objects were. But that part hit the cutting room floor when they edited the piece.

In the next paragraph you have made a serious error, which makes me wonder how carefully you have read my report (and you *should* read it carefully if you are going to criticize it publicly). You say, "But Kasher doesn't seem to realize that since there is no standard frame of reference for motion in space, the 'stopping' could have shown up on the TV screen as motion in *any* direction. It did not, and that's the overlooked clue—it stopped *only* in the reference to the TV's field of view, which suggests the 'stopping' was an artifact of the TV scan, not of the object's actual motion."

You should at least read the *titles* of Appendices D, E, F, and G in my report, and then H and I, too. If you would, you would discover that I have devised a method [explained in the *appendices*] for obtaining the true three-dimensional velocity in real space from the two-dimensional TV screen, and have done so for the main object both before and after its acceleration. From the three true velocity components before the flash, I have been able to determine where the object would be on the screen if it were actually going radially away from the Shuttle, and not truly stopped in space. Look at figure F1 on page 64 [in the FUFOR report] to see where it would have to be. It actually *stops*—the "stopping" is *not* an artifact of the TV scan, as you suggest.

Before I reply to your comment that the stopping is "an illusion of naive data processing by Kasher," I need to see *your* graph of the location of the main object, including proper

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"error bars." (You *do* have one, don't you—you claim that the "curved change of course of the particle fits entirely and smoothly into the error-bar covered region.") I suspect that your error bars will not mask the stopping; but I will wait to see what you've done, and then will give you *my* interpretation.

Jim, that pretty much covers what I have to say this time. I can see how someone with your point of view would initially write a text full of "angry words," as you put it. But you were careless (and a little caustic) in your remarks about what I said, so I felt I had to set the record straight.

Also, Jeff Sainio [*MUFON photo analyst and assistant state director for southern Wisconsin*] said that you told him that a vernier rocket [*a tiny rocket that makes small, adjustments to the Shuttle's orientation*] fired for one second during this time period. Which vernier was it, and what was the exact time, both of the firing and of the acceleration of the main object? I'm also a little curious as to your silence about my report—I sent it in mid-July. Incidentally, I think you know Dr. Russell Anania [*JSC physicist for many years*], who worked on the Shuttle at Johnson Space Center. He went through my report with a fine-tooth comb, and agrees with my analysis.

My workstation currently suffers from osmosis—I can receive electronic mail but can't send it. So I should be able to get a message at [kasher@jove.unomaha.edu](mailto:kasher@jove.unomaha.edu), but for the time being will have to communicate back with regular mail. Hope to hear from you soon, and keep probing into these issues—we need to hear your point of view, too.

### Open Internet Letter to Jack Kasher from James Oberg, Dec. 27, 1994

It's always been my belief that the chance—however remote—that claims of extraterrestrial contact may be valid oblige any curious person to pay more than a little attention to any evidence presented by serious researchers. In parallel, and even if such claims have no real validity, I am fascinated by the mental processes that can lead rational, intelligent, educated people to such claims. In recognition of that obligation and in response to that fascination, I've spent many hundreds of hours on the discussions of the STS-48 zig-zag lights and to the many extraordinary interpretations associated with them.

Since it seems clear to me, based on my experience and analysis, that these videos show nothing at all extraordinary for a space flight,

and that the principal proponents of all extraordinary interpretations remain unaware of relevant information and practices associated with investigating such phenomena, I've reached the conclusion that my "duty to science" has been fully served and no further effort is warranted on my part on this case. Most of my efforts to elucidate and assist investigators in their understanding of this phenomenon seem fruitless. I've published a few articles and one six-page report. There's plenty of other promising research awaiting my attention.

I can and will respond conversationally—in person, or electronically—regarding this case, and I'm not hesitant about expressing my own assessments, but I've reached the point of diminishing returns—in fact, no returns at all—on any more in-depth research. So, enough!

All the objects on the screen look to me to be small, nearby sunlit debris, Shuttle-generated, probably ice flakes from RCS jets, jump ports, the main engines, or elsewhere (possible other types of Shuttle-generated debris include payload bay flotsam, tile or spacer or liner fragments, etc.). They become visible to the wide-open camera when they become sunlit by

**James Oberg** James Oberg, a resident of Dickinson, Texas, in Galveston County, is a senior space engineer for a leading NASA contractor and has worked in payload software development, computer control of orbital maneuvering system rockets and attitude control rockets, and orbital rendezvous.

Omni magazine's "longtime resident skeptic." Mr. Oberg was named in November 1994 to its dubious "Team Open Book" panel of UFO experts. A member of MUFON, Mr. Oberg is also co-founder of the UFO subcommittee of CSICOP, the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal and the author of the 1982 book *UFOs & Outer Space Mysteries: A Sympathetic Skeptic's Report* (available in the Houston Public Library).

moving out of the Shuttle's shadow shortly after sunrise when the ground below is still dark and hence does not activate the camera's auto iris to close down. Gas from an RCS jet (a vernier jet fires for one second at the time shown, and the flash is a sporadic by-product of the jet's firing) pushes them onto new paths (they only change direction during the time of the jet firing).

The main object is not in or behind the atmosphere, although it does appear close to (yet measurably *below*) the horizon line (and, yes, I know which one is the airglow line, too). If the object had been in the atmosphere, as many have claimed, its observed path would curve at first due to atmospheric refraction. The absence of any curving is evidence for the object's being between the atmosphere and the

See STS-48, page 8

## Worth Repeating

### A Skeptic's Code

"With regard to statements, hypotheses, theories, and ideologies considered by the Skeptics Society, the organization adopts the position of the 17th century Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza, 'I have made a ceaseless effort not to ridicule, not to bewail, not to scorn human actions, but to understand them.'"

—The Skeptics Society

### The Jury Is Way Out...

"OMNI magazine has been criticized by many UFO enthusiasts for an apparent skeptical bias bordering on debunkery. Not so, says investigative journalist A. J. S.

(Sally)

Rayl, who writes often for OMNI on UFO issues and was the featured guest at an ISCNI public forum on

Sunday, Jan. 29. 'OMNI's Project Open Book is looking for evidence. It is not in the business of debunking. In fact, publisher Bob Guccione seems certain we'll find that evidence,' Rayl said. Guccione is said to have put more than a million dollars on the line to fund the efforts of the Project Open Book panel, including Rayl, who added that "good cases" are pouring in faster than the project can handle."  
—ISCNI's "CNI News," by Marie Jones ♦

## UFO Notebook

by Bill Eatwell

Welcome to *UFO Notebook*. I'll be reviewing UFO propulsion concepts, landing traces, and other forms of suspect evidence such as the crop circles associated with UFO sightings.

In my 20-plus years of researching and lecturing on the UFO subject, including crop circles, I have never strayed from my objective of determining, through the study of UFO landing sites and recorded observations, what UFO propulsion is and how it works. Nor has the United States government, NASA, some of its major contractors, and all of the militarily well-armed, foreign governments. The bottom line is this: UFOs, with their unequaled, unique flight characteristics, are the future global air superiority fighters for the nation that can duplicate their design! Let's hope the USA figures it out first.

But enough saber rattling.

This first column will introduce the unpublished work of the late Paul R. Hill — *A Scientific Analysis of Unconventional Flying Objects*. In it, Mr. Hill analyzed several well-discussed UFO propulsion concepts, using extensive mathematics to support his theories on what makes a UFO fly. (Propulsion researchers everywhere owe a debt of gratitude to Paul Hill's daughter, Julie M. Hill, who assembled the document, still in draft form, and made it available in 1993.)

Paul Hill studied mechanical engineering (aeronautics) at UCLA in the mid-1930s and later became professor of aeronautics at Polytechnic College of Engineering in

See Notebook, page 9

*STS-48, from page 7*

*Shuttle*. As I said, I interpret its appearance to its becoming sunlit by moving out of the *Shuttle's* shadow, and since this umbra extends only about 1,000 to 2,000 feet down sun, the object is probably much closer yet. I believe all your geometric analyses of great range and speed (including the assumption that the object would have to have been accelerated to plume [*exhaust*] terminal velocity) are invalid. The object's motion shows three phases: pre-burn drift, burn acceleration [*when an ice particle is being pushed by the rocket exhaust*], and post-burn drift [*when the ice particle is floating along after the exhaust has passed*] (with perspective foreshortening at greater range), and attempts to perform a curve fit over the latter two phases with a single equation are unjustified—so the implications are baseless.

To repeat regarding the RCS jet burn duration: your assumption that the flash coincides with the full burn, while reasonable based on earthside analogs, is actually false. The visible flash of an RCS/OMS jet burn is a result of propellant ratio match and is characteristic of the early or late phases of the burn (for OMS burns, as an example, the "flash" lasts about half a second but afterwards, even as the OMS engines continue to burn, the flame is invisible—as videotapes and crew reports confirm). For shorter RCS burns, the thrust can continue even when the flash is absent. So your assumption of burn duration—and your belief that other "experts" (e.g., this "Anania" who doesn't show up in any local phone directory) have performed an adequate review of the report—is erroneous, as are all deductions based on it.

Since you asked, let me tell you briefly how I see the "live TV" issue. The view from a shuttle goes to a TDRSS [*Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System*] link, then down to NASA's White Sands station (sometimes it can go direct to one of a handful of ground sites—Goldstone, Merritt Island, and I think Bermuda), over what is called the "FM Downlink." This frequency channel is used during launch for engine data, and in orbit is used either for TV or for data recorder dumps.

Meanwhile, normal voice signals are digitized on the standard telemetry data stream and are unreadable to amateurs (however, during EVA [*extravehicular activity, i.e., when the astronaut is outside the craft*] and during launch/landing, easily monitored UHF frequencies are used "in the clear"). The voice signals are peeled off the telemetry at White Sands, and together with the video are then bounced to Goddard via another communications satellite. At Goddard the "NASA Select" program is

assembled, which involves decoding the video/voice, adding in feeds from JSC or MSFC [*Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama*], displaying announcements, etc. That "NASA Select" video is the one retransmitted—I think in less than 10 seconds—via the open transponder, for worldwide viewing and videotaping.

The White Sands-to-Goddard satellite link is the source of the controversy over scrambling. It often used to be in the clear, but apparently for the reasons Jenks described (medical, privacy, DoD [Department of Defense] experiments), it would be flipped back and forth to [*be*] encoded. Last I heard, they decided just to keep it encoded and save the time and effort to flip back and forth, since the non-encoded stuff was to be reprocessed and rebroadcast almost immediately on "NASA Select."

Now, the image of some NASA official sitting with his or her hand over a red button in case UFOs swim into view is, in my personal view, pretty ridiculous. There is such a button, but if you ask the press folks, as far as anyone can recall, it's never been used to cut off views of naked frolicking astronauts, or slipped curses, or body parts tumbling through wreckage, or of anything else. You certainly can pursue this idea with the people involved—but it's probably more convenient to cling to the conjured image of a "UFO patrol" lookout with grim-lipped determination to hide the truth from the taxpayers. I slip over into sarcasm... After all, they slipped up on *STS-61*?

And the claim that somebody heard the crew say, "What is that?" also fails: it's not on the video, and nobody has ever provided actual time or the frequency channel of the alleged reception. It's a myth. I know your Nebraska MUFON associate insists he mailed that info to me long ago, but I have his letters and it's not in them. Where is it? Meanwhile, if you want quotable NASA technical data on *STS-48*, including telemetry records of the actual jet firing, you'll have to go in the front door and persuade them it's worth their trouble. Since *STS-48* UFO buffs have branded them as hidiers and falsifiers, I'm sure they'd be delighted to bend over again and be helpful to you.

Anyhow, I've used up my allowance of free advice on this subject and you'll just have to get along without me (and I also refer to Beckjord's enthusiasms, and to Hoagland's video report of 1992, and to Carlotto's in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, too—you didn't monopolize my time, far from it). As I've said tongue in cheek, you and I perhaps cooked up

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*STS-48, from page 8*

this report together as an "intelligence test" for world ufologists to see if they could be taken in by some invalid technical-sounding argumentation. I am not impressed with the level of physics knowledge of the players on the extraordinary side of this issue. Your comments on "laminar flow" at the May 1, 1993, Omaha conference were very illuminating regarding the limits to your familiarity with these admittedly highly specialized topics but since I'm not in the one-on-one free tutoring business, look for technical help elsewhere! Have more fun with this subject, to be sure. It's fun to watch, too.

**Jack Kasher's Response (Personal Letter) to James Oberg, Jan. 8, 1995**

**D**ear Jim, I received your open letter recently, and can understand why you feel that the STS-48 case has reached the point of diminished returns for you. I also respect your decision not to involve yourself in any more in-depth research on the topic, so I will not elaborate to any great extent on your comments, both general and scientific. I think that on some of the points we must just agree to disagree, and each of us must draw his own conclusions about how worthwhile the other's arguments are. I do want to add some final comments on some of your remarks in the open letter, and will try to be brief enough so that you don't feel you need to respond again.

I agree with you that the object first appears below the horizon line so that its actual position is somewhere between the horizon and the *Shuttle*, and not out at the horizon itself.

I disagree with your assertion that the burn acceleration and post-burn drift phases are clearly distinguishable (I would say acceleration and post-acceleration drift); and I find it surprising that you would make this comment, given that you think the data for the "pause" are too noisy [*uncertain*] to be conclusive. And curve fitting both phases together is certainly valid, if done so from the data. A numerical derivative of the position curve would give the observed velocities of both phases—the only uncertainty being in the few pixels involved in the transition from one phase to another. One simply chooses an appropriate numerical  $dx/dt$  from the position-time curve and chugs away. Eyeballing my velocity curves derived from the data and the fits given them shows that the curve fits do appear to represent the data quite reasonably. But I promised not to elaborate, and have probably overdone it already.

At the risk of overdoing it again, I can't resist responding to your claims that since my assumption of burn duration is erroneous, all deductions based on it are as well. This is simply not true—if I use the one-second interval you suggest, the conclusions are still the same, although the final numbers are adjusted somewhat. So proofs three, four, and five, which are based on this information, are still valid, at least in my view. I respect the fact that you undoubtedly still disagree. (By the way, Dr. Russell Anania now lives in Omaha, which explains why he wasn't in your phone book.)

I was pleased to see your explanation on how the scrambled signal is transmitted, then unscrambled for transmission over NASA Select. I am asked about this frequently enough, and it is good to have the additional scientific detail.

Taking a cue from your internet remarks, I did smooth the position-time curve for the main object and added error bars a total of one pixel thick (i.e., plus or minus half a pixel for each data point, which seems reasonable). The "pause" is still clearly in evidence, even though the smoothing process should blur its edges slightly.

Incidentally, according to Dr. Gil Yanow, who was a plasma physicist at JPL [*Jet Propulsion Laboratory*] for a number of years and is now on the physics faculty at Cal Tech, the rocket exhaust from NASA vehicles is designed to exhibit purely laminar flow—this is the most efficient way to provide propulsion. When I realized how much expansion from this flow must be involved in a hot gas in a vacuum, I stopped stressing that point. You probably noticed that I didn't mention it in my report. I am indebted to you for the helpful expansion profiles I did use.

Anyway, I agree that there probably isn't much to gain by going back and forth any further on this subject. I plan to keep poking around, in case something else turns up; but I think the major part of the story has been told. I've found our exchanges interesting and informative; and, as I have mentioned in public many times, you have been fair and honest with me, and have not withheld information. I am very grateful for that. As I said before, keep involved in this business—we need your voice in these matters, too. Who knows, we may even be on the same side of the fence in an investigation one of these days. ♦

*Notebook, from page 7*

Oakland, California, after which he was employed by Langley Research Center (for NACA) and by NASA. Until he retired from NASA in 1970, he worked on key aerospace and flight-oriented projects. Though he had begun quietly reviewing and analyzing unconventional object maneuvers in the 1950s, it was only *after* his retirement—his NACA and NASA superiors had prevented him from discussing UFOs publicly—that he began a concentrated study of the subject. A personal sighting in 1953, investigated by Project Blue Book, lead to the eventual compilation of his materials.

Mr. Hill's approach to resolving the questions posed by UFOs was to seek answers in the physical and engineering sciences. He believed that his explanation of the phenomenon would initiate a dialogue in which pieces of the UFO puzzle would fit together for even the casual observer. And, as he put it, "The clever bystander [would be able to] suggest a piece here and there to aid the progress and correct misfits, for teamwork is essential in the end."

In the next issue, I will summarize Mr. Hill's analysis of his and other UFO propulsion concepts and why the others failed his scientific analysis.

*Bill Eatwell is a member of MUFON, VTSIT, and HUFON. He has a BS in technology from the University of Houston, a pilot's license, and five U.S. patents. He is the author of HUFON Report's "Crop Circle Update." Bill is employed as a contract design engineer with an international oil field service company. ♦*

## Arcturus Books, Inc. Catalog: A Review

by David Mayo

If you are looking for a one-stop shop for UFO, paranormal, or Fortean information, look no farther than Arcturus Books, Inc. It is doubtful you could name any publication this company doesn't carry.

Though I have never reviewed a catalog before, I was shortly being entertained by the abundant entries inside. The reason is Arcturus' president, Robert C. Girard. Not satisfied with a simple listing of available books, Mr. Girard has attached a personal comment to practically every entry. Foregoing blind salesmanship, he calls them as he sees them. A few comments show a somewhat caustic slant: "...the armpit of UFO research," "hopelessly contaminated ravings," and "shameless rip-off of our sensibilities"—but I found them refreshing.

Mr. Girard should be commended for building such a unique stock of alternative science publications. One minor complaint: the 8½ x 5½ in catalog I reviewed contained very small print.

The catalog is free on request for new applicants. To stay on the mailing list, however, you must place an order.

To order, write to Arcturus Books, 1443 SE Port St. Lucie Blvd., Port St. Lucie, Florida 34952; phone (407) 398-0796; or fax (407) 337-1701.

[Editor's note: Arcturus now offers Houston Sky to its catalog readers.] ♦

## A Conversation with Lucius Farish

by Gayle Nesom

*The following is an excerpt of an 1994 interview with Lucius Farish, who runs the UFO Newsclipping Service and organizes the Ozark UFO Conference, held each year in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. This is a great conference (April 7-9, 1995), one you should attend if at all possible.*

**The audience and speakers seem very loyal to the Ozark conference. Why is that?** I wish I knew. We try to present good speakers at a decent price. But I think 90 percent of our success is the location. People come from out of state who've never been to Eureka Springs before, and they love it. They have to make a little extra effort to get there. What we try to do is have a cross between a UFO conference and a family reunion. And I think we've achieved that to a certain extent.

**What was the attendance at the conference this year (1994)?** We had somewhere between 410 and 420 people. Last year (1993), we had about 100 more, but the Easter weekend was probably responsible for the lower count.

**Who has been your most popular speaker?** It's hard to say. Last year, Dr. John Mack was one of the favorites. This year (1994), I had especially good comments about Bob Emenegger's and Forest Crawford's talks. There are four people that we have every year: Linda Howe, Antonio Huneus, George Wingfield, and Forest Crawford.

**This is the 25th year for the newsclipping service (UFONS). How did you start it?** I took it over [from Rod Dyke] in 1977, and I guess I'll keep on doing it as long as anyone's interested in subscribing to it. The clippings come from Allen's, a bureau in Seattle. A lot of people—subscribers and correspondents—also

send me clippings, and I'm always very glad to get them. Timothy Good subscribes to a newsclipping service in Great Britain, and he sends me copies of everything he gets.

**What is the circulation?** About 550 to 600. Most of the well-known researchers subscribe, and I often send things to groups on an exchange basis.

**What about non-UFO subscribers?** Well, no copies go directly to the CIA or NSA. I figure if they're interested, they've probably got copies one way or the other.

**Do you think your former governor, our President, is interested in learning—or revealing—the truth about UFOs?** I'd say that Bill Clinton is like most politicians—his major interest is getting reelected. Beyond that, I can't say. I'm of the believe-it-when-I-see-it school. The only way I think the government will ever make any official announcement concerning UFOs is if the UFOs themselves force the situation to the point where the government has no choice.

*A monthly subscription to the UFO Newsclipping Service (\$55) includes a 20-page monthly report of domestic and international articles (foreign clippings translated) and four additional pages of Fortean news.*

*For information on UFONS or the 1995 Annual Ozark UFO Conference (April 7-9), contact Lucius Farish at (501) 354-2558. ♦*

## Spotlight on Jacob Grier

**T**welve-year-old Jacob Grier is an honor student at Klein School District's Strack Intermediate School—and an Associate Member of MUFON. Jacob first became interested in UFOs four years ago, after seeing what he thought was a UFO. He eventually decided his experience had been only a very realistic dream. But that dream got him hooked on the subject.

Today, one of Jacob's particular interests is SETI [now replaced by Project Phoenix, see page 5]. His favorite authors are Jenny Randles and, intriguingly, Philip Klass. He believes that "UFOs could be anything." In his opinion, however, while some can be explained, others

represent unknown phenomena and some definitely do not come from this earth.

Jacob feels the public has a right to know the truth about the UFO phenomenon and that humankind would benefit from solving the mystery. However, he also thinks it is important that the UFO community trust the government to release any startling or terrifying information at the right time—especially, he says, since the average congressman or senator probably doesn't know or care about the subject anyway.

As Jacob says, "We'll probably discover the truth ourselves within 30 years, without hassling anyone. And when we do, the population may be ready for the facts." ♦

# MUFON and MUFON-Houston

by Rebecca Schatte

*At MUFON-Houston's recent get-together, some members asked how the local and national MUFON groups interrelated. The following should help clarify their relationship.*

**T**he Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) is an international organization with more than 5,000 members who investigate and report on UFO sightings worldwide. MUFON, which publishes the monthly *Mutual UFO Network Journal*, is headquartered in Seguin, TX. Walt Andrus is Director. Deputy Director is MUFON-Houston's own John Schuessler.

## Texas MUFON

International MUFON has several regional directors (Texas, in the Central region, is fortunate to have Jack Kasher [see page 6] as director), as well as directors for individual states and, in large states like Texas, more than one section director. Texas' state director is Ellen Stuart, who lives in Austin. Ellen has an assistant, MUFON-Houston's Andy Abercrombie, and numerous regional section directors. State section directors are appointed for one or more counties, depending on geography and population. Gayle Nesom is state section director for Harris County (Greater Houston). Neighboring Galveston, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties have their own: Daryl Furse, William Bryson, and Betty Mitchell, respectively.

## MUFON-Houston

While all MUFON members receive the monthly *MUFON Journal*, Harris County members also get *Houston Sky* (this is our third issue). MUFON-Houston will not have regular pro-

grams, but we will occasionally have social events, such as the recent one at Pico's (see below) and informal discussions. For your MUFON membership of \$25 a year, you receive the *MUFON Journal* and *Houston Sky*. (Some nonmembers subscribe to *Houston Sky* for \$15). In some states, an added fee is required by the local organization to support meetings and newsletters. Presently, we have no additional fee (membership or newsletter subscription) for Texas or Harris County MUFON members. We do anticipate, possibly next year, instituting a charge for the newsletter, since no monies are passed down the line from the national organization to the various "chapters."

For those of you who are new to the UFO field and even to MUFON, Harris County was without a state section director for several years and only briefly (several years ago) had a local "chapter." A different local group that has existed here for several years is the Houston UFO Network. A local group not affiliated with MUFON, HUFON holds monthly meetings (see "Of Interest").

We encourage you to join MUFON and as many other UFO organizations as money, time, and interest will allow. The more you learn, the more comfortable you will be with your perspectives and beliefs. ♦

## Local Activities for MUFON-Houston

by Gayle Nesom

**T**he newly formed MUFON-Houston is young—but alive and well. When I was named state section director for Harris County in late June 1994, I had several clear goals in mind for the group: to adhere to MUFON principles and focus on investigations (rather than programs), to take a conservative approach to the phenomenon, to publish a strong newsletter, and to enable members to become acquainted. I also didn't want to "run the show" alone.

With Rebecca Schatte's help, I began publishing *Houston Sky* in October as a means of communicating with members and linking the local group with the wider UFO community. We had our first MUFON gathering—an informal get-together at a local restaurant—on Saturday, January 21. More than 50 people attended, including 30 of Harris County's 80

members. The party was fun and gave people a chance to meet fellow members.

Before the Pico's gathering, a group of 14 MUFON members met to discuss the group's structure and goals. In the next *Houston Sky*, I'll include some details.

The immediate plans are to hold an investigator training class (see "Of Interest") to prepare members to become "certified" (knowledgeable) MUFON investigators. MUFON investigator Kristy Jones will lead the class. If you're interested in signing up and your newsletter doesn't have a registration form, please call me at (713) 772-0222. You are also welcome to call me if you have suggestions about MUFON-Houston or *Houston Sky*, or if you are interested in serving on the MUFON-Houston steering committee. ♦

## HOUSTON SKY

No. 3, Feb./Mar. 1995

*Houston Sky* is published as a forum for the open exchange of ideas and information for Houston-area MUFON members and others. Because views within the UFO community are so varied, the opinions and observations expressed in *HS* do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial staff or of other MUFON members.

**Reprint Policy:** Selections may be reprinted. Please credit *Houston Sky* and identify it as a Houston-area MUFON publication.

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*HS*'s Feb./Mar. 1995 issue is being mailed to 350 readers. Arcturus Books Inc. includes *HS* in its monthly catalogue.

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## Media Report Card (Part 1)

by David Mayo

**T**rust no one. Words to live by, according to FBI Agent Fox Mulder on the Fox Network's popular show, "The X-Files." As I sat down to critique the various UFO-related properties offered by television, Fox Mulder's words seemed to apply. As devotees in search of the truth about UFOs, we have lately been entertained by more shows than ever offering the truth in one form or another. Sometimes it seems that I stand at the top of a mountain scanning the forest below for fire while crowds around me point and exclaim, "Smoke, there and over there!" But, these wisps of smoke never ignite and are immediately gone with the wind. Such is my attitude toward UFO shows. Not that my attitude prevents me from watching every UFO show that comes along. I, like you, can't get enough.

**Encounters (Fox)**

This program has one particular tendency that infuriates me and draws a grade of C. "Encounters" likes to bring the main personality of an aired report to the studio for a personal touch. This personal touch usually involves a brief one to two questions and answers, and then it ends. To have a well-known UFO authority present in the studio and not ask any in-depth questions is, at the very least, a missed opportunity. [Editor's note: Marie Jones, MUFON California and ISCNI's "CNI News," reports that "Encounters" will soon be off the air.]

**Sightings (UPN)**

This program, first broadcast by the Fox network—dropped and then acquired by UPN—gets a grade of B. Dealing with the paranormal as well as UFOs, "Sightings" seems serious enough in its approach, but

covers too many topics within the allotted hour, diluting segments that deserve further attention. All too often, we are left with obvious questions never addressed. [Alas, "Sighting's" days are also numbered, according to Marie Jones, of ISCNI's "CNI News."]

**The X-Files (Fox)**

It's fiction, right? "The X-Files" is quite possibly the most popular show for UFO fanatics everywhere. Its mixture of detective story, factual UFO data, government malfeasance, and paranormal happenings is irresistible. All subjects, no matter how strange, are given somber, dramatic treatment flavored by excellent acting and story lines. David Duchovny (who, by the way, does not personally believe in UFOs) and Gillian Anderson (who does) are believable as Agents Mulder and Scully, with each on-screen personality complementing the other. What started (according to producer Chris Carter, who admits to attending his share of UFO conferences) as an update of the "Night Stalker" series has become an award winner and runaway hit. I give it an A.

**Unsolved Mysteries (NBC)**

Having used a re-creation of a major UFO event for its primary segment on each new season opener, the producers of *Unsolved Mysteries* understand the draw UFO stories bring. They also spare no expense in their dramatizations, providing us with in-depth coverage (albeit long after the fact), with longer interviews, and for the most part, excellent special effects. My only complaint is that they rarely revisit UFO stories that have, since first airing, evolved and solidified. It gets a B.

Next issue, I will continue with a look at magazine and talk shows and the role of the media in the establishment of truth. ♦

## Of Interest

**Houston Area****MUFON-Houston**

Investigator Training Course  
Open to MUFON members only  
Feb. 25, Mar. 11 & 25, Apr. 1  
\$15, plus materials (\$20 at the door)  
Information: Call (713) 772-0222.

**HUFON (Houston UFO Network)**

Colorado Cattle Mutilations  
Christopher O'Brien  
Friday, April 7, 7:30 PM  
Holiday Inn, I-10 @ Silber

**VISIT (Vehicle Internal Systems Investigative Team)**

The 1897 Airships (see article, p. 2)  
John Schuessler  
Monday, February 13, 6:30 PM  
Freeman Memorial Library  
16602 Diana Lane, Clear Lake City

**Elsewhere****1995 Ozarks UFO Conference**

April 7, 8, 9  
Eureka Springs, Arkansas  
Speakers: Linda Howe, Antonio Huneus, George Wingfield, Forest Crawford, Michael Zimmerman  
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